(c) With effect from 28th October, 2000, the entry fee to Taj Mahal has been increased from Rs. 5.00 to Rs. 10.00 per head for Indians and US$ 10.00 for others. Children below 15 years are allowed free entry.

Maintenance, conservation and environmental development of the Taj Mahal, Agra is a continuous process.

Provision of Tourist Facilities at Taj Mahal

1737. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether entry fee for the Taj at Agra and other archaeological sites, had lately been increased, if so, to what extent, and the additional tourist attractions and facilities provided with such increases;

(b) whether any fee for offering prayers at the tombs has been imposed/ increased; if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) whether despite such increase in entry fees, the condition and maintenance of such sites, especially the Taj has been deteriorating fast; if so, the steps being take to prevent deterioration and improve the conditions?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) The entry fee for fourteen world heritage sites has been increased from Rs. 5/- to Rs. 10/- for Indian citizens and U.S. $ 10 for others. In the other monuments, the entry fees has been increased from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 5/- for Indian citizens and U.S. $ 5 for others.

The proceeds from sale of entry tickets does not directly go to the monument concerned. However, monuments have been separately identified for conservation and upgradation of amenities through funding by State Governments and assistance through funding by individuals, communities or the corporate sector through the National Culture Fund.

(b) There is no entry fees for offering customary prayers on Fridays.

(c) The centrally protected monuments are generally in a good state of preservation and necessary conservation measures are taken for their structural stability subjecXt to the overall availability of funds.

Decline in Tourst visit to Taj Mahal

1738. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to refer to

answer to Unstarred Question 227 given in Rajya Sabha in 21st November, 2000 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Agra has been facing a slump in the number of foreign tourists visiting the city since the entry rates were raised; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

Development of Tourism in Chhattisgarh

†1739. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:
SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country is not able to utilise its tourism potentialities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the amount allotted and the amount actually utilised State-wise specially to Chhattisgarh for the development of tourism during the year 1999-2000 and the year 2000-2001;

(d) the State-wise details including the State of Chhattisgarh of the undergoing tourism projects started by Government; and

(e) the expected time of completion of the above projects, specially in the State of Chhattisgarh?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Tourism potential of India can not be quantified. There has been a growth in tourist arrivals of 5.2 per cent in 1999 which has increased to 6.2 per cent (provisional) upto November, 2000 and foreign exchange earnings have gone up from 9.2 per cent to 10.1 per cent (provisional).

(b) Does not arise.

(c) In 1999-2000 the Deptt. of Tourism, Government of India sanctioned 415 projects for State/Union Territories for an amount of Rs. 94.60 crores including sixteen projects amounting to Rs. 4.31 crores for Madhya Pradesh. Out of the projects sanctioned for Madhya Pradesh, four projects amounting

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.